FEMININE AND FEMINIST SENSIBILITY IN THE SELECT PLAYS OF VIJAY TENDULKAR AND GIRISH KARNAD

Synopsis Submitted to

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded

For the Award of the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in English under the Faculty of Arts

Researcher

Sable Nagesh Lakhanlal

M.A. English NET SET

Research Supervisor

Dr. Shailaja B. Wadikar

Professor of English

School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies

S.R.T.M. University, Nanded - 431606.

April - 2019

FEMININE AND FEMINIST SENSIBILITY IN THE SELECT PLAYS OF VIJAY TENDULKAR AND GIRISH KARNAD.

Introduction :-

Drama is one of the highest forms of artistic expression and harmonious blending of verse, dancing art, melody and action. It is a delightful source of entertainment, splendid form of visual art as well as the most appealing medium of instructions. It is designed for the performance on the stage where the actors play role accordingly and with uttering the written dialogue. Drama and Poetry are considered to be the foremost legendary forms rising from the ancient Greek culture. Originally, the term drama is derived from Greek word meaning “action” or “to act” or “to do”. It can be defined as the specific mode of fiction represented in performance. Drama seems different from other literary genres because it is rarely intended for reading but exclusively designed for performance.

India has glorious legacy of drama right from the ancient era. The origin of Indian drama can be explored back in the Vedic Period. It is much older than English drama. Before thousands of years Indian drama was at its culmination. It was in its blossom before Aristole's monumental work ‘Poetics’ came into existence. The journey of Indian drama started with the Sanskrit plays, among which *Natyashastra* is the oldest text of the theory of the drama. India has affluent evidences of dramatic art in the form of the holy scriptures like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In Indian mythology, drama is considered as fifth Veda - *Natyaveda*, the zenith of all four Vedas. Thus, the origin of Indian drama is found in the Vedic Period. Most celebrated dramatists of the ancient era are Ashwagosh, Bhasa, Shudraka, Kalidasa, Harsha, Bhavbhuti, Vishakhadatta.

Indian drama in English rightly flourished in the 18th century when the British Rule became stable in India. British brought with them, the theatre. But during the initial decades of their rule, they could not present English drama due to the unawareness of Indians regarding the English Language. Hence, a lot of English plays, like those of Shakespeare were translated into Indian Languages and then presented before the Indians. Gradually, Western education made its

way to India. As a result, Indian drama in English came into existence. English drama in India was started by Krishna Mohan Banerji with his work *The Persecuted* (1837). Later, the tradition of Indian drama in English was flourished by the eminent Indian playwrights like Michael Madhu Sudan Dutt. It made quite progress in the age of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. Rabindranath Tagore, the first Indian Nobel Laureate, was an exponent of dramatic art in both English and Bengali languages.

Indian drama in English flourished immensely from the translation of regional plays into English. Now, it has earned name and fame in India as well as across the world. Contemporary Indian drama is more experimental and innovative in terms of thematic and technical qualities. It seems slightly deviating from classical and European models. It is an endeavour of reinvestigating Indian history, tradition, language, legend, myth, religion and folk lore with the context of contemporary socio-political issues. A cumulative theatrical tradition in the history of Indian drama in English was developed by prominent Indian dramatists like Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sirkar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad. This troupe of playwrights prepared a fertile background of contemporary Indian English theatre and skillfully presented the socio-cultural, political, social problems and conflicts in their plays.

The present proposed research aims at exploring feminine and feminist sensibility in the select plays of Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad. It will be a minute study of weak and strong female characters from the select plays. The select plays show a sordid picture of patriarchal social structure and the sham moral standards of Indian society where women undergo a series of sufferings as the victims of the hegemonic power structure. The select plays represent an environment of social structure with two different facets of women's personality. Some of them apparently looks silent sufferers of intrigue, hypocrisy, greed, brutality of male dominated society while some of them are quite rebellious, bold, revolutionary and courageous in nature. They continuously raise their voice against injustice, gender inequality and gender based exploitation. The collective efforts of both dramatists genuinely attempts to study and explore the root cause of gender inequality in the dominated tendencies of men through their plays. Also their plays underline the spirit of women for individual rights, respect, independent life, self-identity, quest for completeness and emancipation from agonies of life-long tortures.

The corpus of the study will be the select plays of Vijay Tendulkar's such as *Silence! The Court Is in Session, Sakharam Binder, Kamala*, *Kanyadan,* and that of Girish Karnad's such as *Yayati*, *Bali : The Sacrifice, Hayavadana* and *Naga-Mandala*.

1.1. Statement of the Problem :-

The contemporary society is witnessing today an extraordinary spectacle of women's liberation movements all over the world. It is a universal movement and Indian society is no exception to it. We have the voices of feminism in the writings of a number of writers since the 13th century to the present such as Janabai, Tarabai Shinde, Anita Desai, Kamala Das, Kamala Markendeya, Kiran Desai, Shashi Deshpande and so on. However, even in the 21st century, society is male-dominated. It is for this reason that women have been marginalized despite their fifty percent population in the world.

Biologically as well as culturally, human beings are divided into two classes: men and women. This division is further accentuated by the roles they are assigned to play in the making of a family. Man is the head of the family, governing and controlling all its affairs. Woman is entrusted with the household responsibilities, particularly those of cooking food and rearing children. This leads to the formation of exploitative and oppressive society of men as against the exploited and oppressed society of women.

Quite a good number of works in the post modern period illustrate, more or less, how women are exploited in various ways. The inhuman treatment that they receive from the male-dominated society indicates that they lose their freedom first and their lives later for the sake of man. Ideally speaking, it is sacrifice, but realistically speaking, it is sheer wastage physical as well as mental, on the part of women.

1.2. Review of Literature :-

One can notice that Tendulkar in their plays, unveil two major tendencies of the Indian society: male dominance and feminine frailty. Women are projected as suffering a lot at the hands of their male-counterparts. They do not have equal status with men and, sometimes, part with their individual dignity, too. They are exploited both socially and economically. Although

men are largely responsible for the exploitative and oppressive nature of society, women remain contributory to it. Here, the playwrights seem to attack the Indian women's conservative minds, which do not allow them to show guts in encounter with their male-companions. Furthermore, they even provide them with an emotional support in a period of crisis. The tendency of enduring exploitation is so deep-rooted in their bones that even the thought of rebellion does not arise in their minds. They are hardly assertive and, at times, seem so slavish that their love and loyalty towards their husbands and families do not allow them to raise any voice against them. The women characters, projected in the works of these playwrights, thus, appear to be the mute witnesses of the womankind's endless suffering in Indian society for centuries.

It is not so in Girish Karnad. His women betray Nora's courage and understanding, become rebels and by their protestations declare their independence. In this sense of being "free", they are really "new women'.

It is observed that he characters such as Padmini in *Hayavadana,* Rani in *Nagamandala*, Devayani, Sharmistha, and Chitralekha in *Yayati* and Vijaya in *Encounter in Umbugland,* are in sharp contrast with other female characters in the different plays. In her search of complete man Savitri raises a voice of protest and goes against tradition. However, her grand rebellion comes to nothing as the man, whom she chooses as her life-partner, turns a tail and refuses to accept the challenge. Through the character of Padmini, Karnad portrays a new woman who has no hitch or hesitation in sharing bed with two men. To have a complete, perfect man as her life companion, she transposes the heads of Kapila, her lover and Devadatta, her husband. Instead of being dictated by men, it is she who controls the situation and takes decisions. However, she, too, like Savitri gets defeated by the forces of nature. Rani, the protagonist of Nagamandala, is initially one of slavish type, but later grows in stature as a rebel and turns table on her husband by avenging the wrong to her and also by being publicly and privately venerated. Devayani, Sharmistha and Chitralekha are at the centre of the play *Yayati.* Through their characters, Karnad portrays strong women in the society. But they are controlled by their male companions. Vijaya in *Encounter in Umbugland* is an iron-willed woman. Her encounter with her ministers and her victory in it throw light on women's extraordinary inherent power. Hostile circumstances play little, negligible role in shaping the good fortunes of such dominant people. The play's depiction of Vijaya's triumph over her rivals signals the inauguration of Women's Empowerment.

1.3. Aims and Objectives of Research :-

The aims and objectives of proposed research are as follows:

1. To study the place and position of women in male dominated Indian society represented by Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar in the select plays.

2. To project feminine sensibility of women who appears as conservative, oppressed, voiceless, orthodox, religious and self-sacrificing in the select plays.

3. To depict feminist sensibility of women who reacts as revolutionary, rebellious, social-aware, liberal, rational, and aggressive for equal rights and in search of self entity.

4. To analyze the hegemonic power structure of Indian society where women viewed as a mere object and placed as marginalized one.

5. To investigate the male dominance in Indian middle class family where women becomes silent sufferers of endless miseries.

6. To understand the female psyche in the select plays in relation with traditional orthodox principle of religion and social structure where they lives and how they dare to face tragic problems of life.

1.4. Hypotheses :-

The present research focuses on following hypotheses:

1. It is believed in the Indian society that woman essentially need male support for her smooth life. She has no entity without her male-counterpart in society.

2. It is the tragedy of woman since ancient to modern times that she has been used as only a tool to fulfil all demands in family and society.

3. It is one of the principle of the male - dominated society that woman must do household duties without any complain. In addition she must follow the principle of chastity, customs and norms in the family.

4. Emotions, feelings, zeal of love, her quest for perfection, her futile effort of being self-reliant, the spirit of defence has less importance in the oppressed social structure of society.

5. Feminist sensibility in the select plays underlines women's striving for acquiring freedom, equality and privileges as human being.

1.5. Research Methodology :-

The research method to be adopted will be followed in the critical study of literature or criticism. In short, it will be one of descriptive, exploratory, and interpretative nature. The study material will comprise the texts, questionnaires, and personal interviews of the scholars related to the concerned field.

1.6. The Significance of the Study :-

This study, to sum up, will arrive at some significant inferences. The dramatists aim at bringing to light some of the most complex and vital issues of our existence, inner and outer. One can approach his plays from various points of view, such as psychological, sociological, politico-cultural, deterministic, existential, feminist, etc. A brief, cursory but analytical treatment will be given in the study to all these aspects or dimensions of their plays with a focus on the feminine and feminist sensibility. Women will be projected as a class, performing a major role in shaping the society. A modest, sincere attempt will be made to present Tendulkar and Karnad as a men of the theatre with its variegated aspects.

The analytical study of these translated plays reveals that the dramatist has a desire to strive tirelessly for perfection of life where there are no barriers of caste, class, sex, etc., in society. He dreams, so to say, of freedom, equality, and social justice for one and all.

1.7. Tentative Chapter Scheme :-

1. Introduction
2. Feminine and Feminist Sensibility in the Select Plays of Vijay Tendulkar.
3. Feminine and Feminist Sensibility in the Select Plays of Girish Karnad.

4. A Comparative Study of the Feminine and Feminist Sensibility in the Select Plays of Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnad.
5. Conclusion

Bibliography :-

Primary Sources:

Tendulkar, Vijay. *Collected Plays in Translation*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Karnad, Girish. *Collected Plays.* Oxford University Press, 2010.

Karnad, Girish. *Yayati*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Secondary Sources:

Abrams, M. H. and Harpham, and Geoffrey Galt. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* Wadsworth a part of Cengage Learning, Publication, 2012.

Babu, Manchi Sarat. *Indian Drama Today: Study in the Theme of Cultural Deformity.* Prestige, 1997.

Bamber, Gascoigne. *Twentieth Century Drama.* Hutchson, 1962.

Bhatta, S. Krishna. *Indian English Drama: A Critical Study.* Sterling, 1987.

Birjagdish, Prasad. *A Background to the Study of English Literature.* Macmillan, 1997.

Chakraborty, Kaustav. *Indian Drama in English.* PHI Learning Pvt Ltd, 2011.

Dodiya J.K., and K.V. Surendran, editors. *Indian English Drama: Critical Perspectives.* Sarup and Sons, 2000.

Iyengar, Srinivasa. *Indian Writing in English*. Sterling Publishers Pvt.Ltd., 2012.

Nimsarkar, P.D. *Women in Girish Karnad's Plays: A Critical Perspective*. Creative Books, 2009.

Pandey, Sudhakar, and Freya Barua, editors. *New Directions in Indian Drama.* Prestige, 1994.

Pandey, Sudhakar, and Freya Taraporwala, editors. *The Studies in Contemporary Indian Drama.* Prestige, 1990.

Prasad A.N., et al., editors. *Studies in Indian Drama in English.* Prakash Book Depot, 2003.

Place: Nanded

Date: April, 2019

Researcher

Sable Nagesh Lakhanlal
M.A.English NET SET

Research Supervisor

Dr. Shailaja B. Wadikar
Professor of English
SLLCS, S.R.T.M.University,
Nanded-431606.